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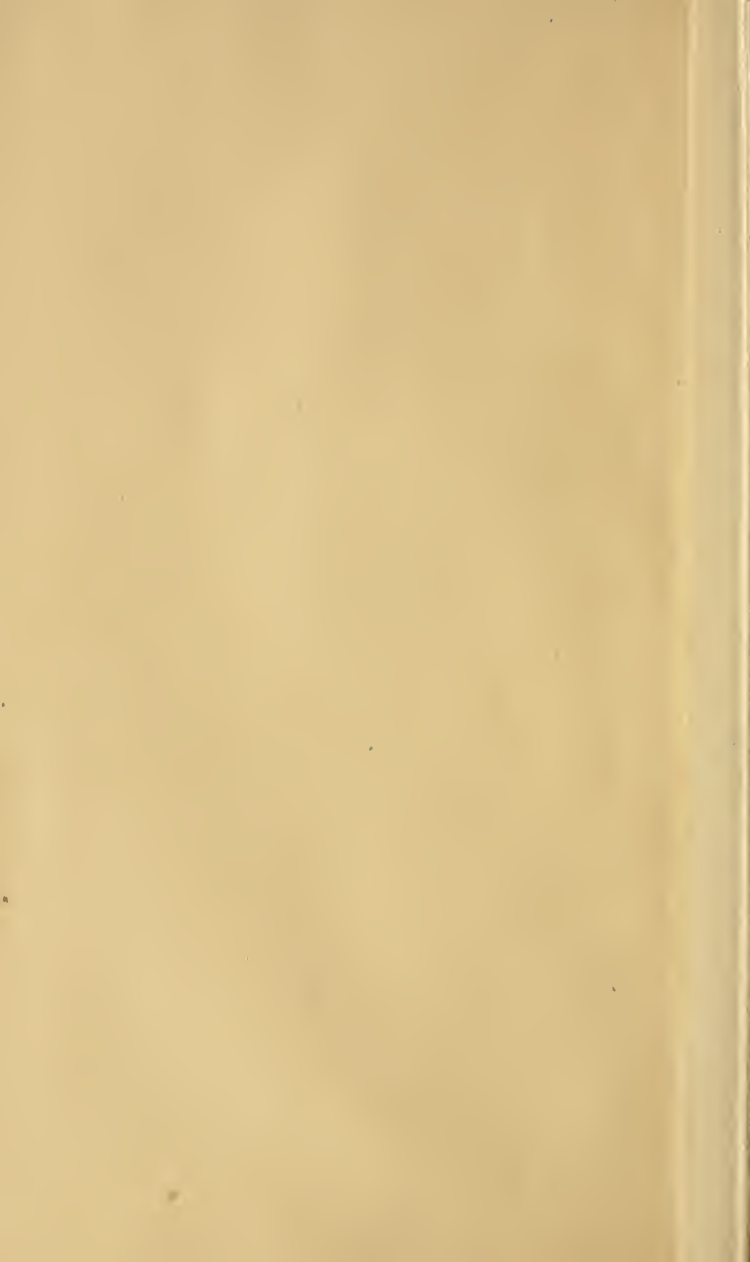




Class E 331

Book II 37





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CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Democratic Association

OF THE

COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER,

IN THE

State of New-Jersey,

TO WATCH OVER AND DEFEND THE LIBERTY OF THE
PEOPLE ON THE TRUE PRINCIPLES
OF DEMOCRACY.

Also,

mode of settling differences by Arbitration.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ADDRESS

To the Inhabitants of said County.

TRENTON:

PRINTED BY WILSON & BLACKWELL,

PRINTERS, BOOKSELLERS, & STATIONERS.

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1803.

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AT a special Meeting of the Democratic Association of the County of Gloucester, held at the house of Joseph Heppard, in Woodbury, on the 18th day of April, 1803, Ordered, That 1000 Copies of the Constitution of the Association, with an Address be printed, and distributed by the Committees of the respective Townships, among the Citizens of said County.

Constitution, &c.

THE objects of this Association are, to investigate the means of promoting the happiness of mankind, to point out the defects in the laws of our country, and suggest such amendments and such new laws as may be deemed beneficial, to notice as well encroachments on the rights of the people, as such measures as tend to weaken or destroy the constitution of this State, or of the United States, and to communicate valuable and useful information, to discuss all useful and interesting subjects, to promote morality and virtue, to strengthen those benevolent ties which bind us together, and to assist each other in all laudable designs :... For accomplishing these purposes, the following Articles are adopted :

Article 1st. The Association shall consist of an unlimited number of members, who reside in the county aforesaid, and the stated meetings shall be four in every year, viz. on the fourth day of March, the last Monday in August, the third Monday in October, and the first Monday in January.

Art. 2. The officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Committee of correspondence, who shall be elected at the stated meeting in March in every year.

Art. 3. The President shall preside at the meetings of the association, regulate the debates, determine questions of order, and in case of an equality of votes in any business he shall have a casting vote, he shall subscribe all acts of the association, and may call a special meeting.

The Vice-President, in the absence of the President shall exercise all his powers and authority, and if they are both absent at any meeting of the association a chairman may be elected, *pro tem.*

The Secretary shall keep true minutes of the proceedings of the association, and record them in a book provided for that purpose.

The Treasurer shall receive and account for all the monies of the association, and pay all orders signed by the President and counter signed by the Secretary.

The Committee of correspondence shall consist of two or more in each township, and shall collect such political or other information as may be beneficial to the institution, and correspond with similar societies, that are or may be formed in this state, or elsewhere, for the purpose of disseminating the genuine principles of justice, liberty, and the inherent rights of man; and in case of a state meeting, to appoint delegates to attend the same.

Art. 4. Every meeting of the association shall be constituted by calling the roll, and entering on the minutes the names of the members present, after which the business shall be performed in the following order:

1st The minutes of the preceding meeting shall be read, and corrected if necessary.

2. The reports of committees shall be called for.

3. Communications shall be presented.

4. New business, if any, proposed.

5. No debate shall be entered into, or question put on any motion, unless it be seconded.

6. In case of division on any subject of debate, it shall be decided by a majority of votes, and the yeas and nays shall be entered on the minutes, if demanded by any five members.

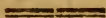
Art. 5. Whenever any public measure shall appear to the association sufficiently interesting to be canvassed in the Newspapers, or otherwise, a committee shall be appointed to write on that subject, and if the object be very important and pressing, the committee may publish without the sanction of the association.

Art. 6. New members may be admitted at either of the stated meetings of the association, or any special meeting called by the President, or Vice-President, provided the person applying for admission be recom-

mended by a majority of the committee of correspondence of the township in which he resides, and approved by a majority of the members present.

Art. 7. Every person who shall subscribe this constitution, shall pay to the Treasurer the sum of fifty cents, and shall at the stated meeting in October, pay annually the sum of twenty-five cents to support the funds, which shall be applied to the promotion of political knowledge, or such other useful information as they shall direct.

Art. 8. No member shall be expelled except it be for disorderly conduct, or holding sentiments contrary to the principles of this constitution, and in either case it must be done at a general meeting, and by a plurality of votes of the members present; but any member may withdraw his name by an application, either verbally or in writing, at any one of the stated meetings.



AN ASSOCIATION

For settling Differences by Arbitration.

W^h the subscribers, citizens of Gloucester county, in order to avoid the great expence, time and trouble, attending on law-suits, and to discourage contention, animosity, broils, malice, and hatred, between individuals, between families, and in neighborhoods, and as much as in us lies, to promote peace, harmony, friendship, love, and goodwill amongst mankind, severally promise and engage, that in all cases of debt, altercation, or dispute, amongst ourselves or our neighbors, we will use our utmost influence to have the same settled by an amicable reference to men equally selected by each party, in preference to the usual course of law, and in order to encourage so judicious, so laudable

and so christian-like mode of adjudication, we promise to aid and assist each other when applied to, in advice as to the mode of procedure in stating our demands, and in the selection of suitable men for arbitrators, in order to carry into effect the good design hereby intended.

An Address

To the Citizens of Gloucester County.

Fellow Citizens,

WE conceive it our duty, at this important period of time, to call your attention, to the state of political parties in the United States, and more particularly in this State, and to facts, which clearly demonstrate the intentions and ultimate end contemplated by the contending parties... And first, to enable you to decide justly, we shall briefly describe the leaders, most conspicuous, and zealous supporters of said Parties...

The supporters of the late administration of John Adams, who have lately assumed the name of Federal Republicans, and who continue their opposition to the Administration of Thomas Jefferson, are generally Lawyers, Office-holders, or Office-hunters, Monarchists, Aristocrats, Proprietors of Bank Stock, British Merchants, British Agents, Tories, and Refugees; The opposers of John Adams' Administration, and supporters of Thomas Jefferson's, called Democratic Republicans, are generally Farmers, Mechanics, American Merchants, and Doctors. The latter of these parties, at the end of the revolutionary war with Great Britain, concluding that the justice, and equity of a Democratic government, would unite all in one common interest, unsuspectingly retired to their respective occupations;

but the former, whose interests are as contrary to that of the yeomanry of the United States, as darkness to light, or vice to virtue, taking advantage of their innocent credulity, and inattention to the conduct of public officers, engrossed nearly all the offices civil and military in the United States; they adopted an unjust funding system, whereby our public debt was more than doubled; they erected a number of Banks, and other sources of speculation, upon the British plan, and finally procured the election of John Adams to the presidential chair, whose administration exhibits a scene, at once extravagant, oppressive, deceptive, and tyrannical, and subversive of the constitution he was sworn to support. To prove this, we adduce the records of congress, and other official documents, by which it will appear, that in twelve years of unexampled prosperity, (according to their own repeated declarations on the floor of congress and elsewhere) they paid not a farthing of our debt, but contrarywise increased it nine millions four hundred thousand dollars; they borrowed eight millions of dollars, at the enormous interest of eight per cent, paid quarterly, which enables the lender to double his money in less than eight years; permitting at the same time, twenty millions of dollars, to remain unaccounted for in the hands of public officers, for them to speculate upon. They multiplied supernumerary officers, and foreign ambassadors, by which great sums of money was uselessly expended. They attempted to supercede the Militia by a standing army, and Volunteer corps; they passed an excise law, and stamp act, (names abhorrent to free-men) and divers other internal taxes; also a direct tax on Houses, and lands, with orders to their assessors to take an account of the window lights; all tending to increase civil and military officers, dependent upon the executive, and independent of the people, to harraßs, and eat out their substance, and force unconditional submission to unjust and tyrannical laws, similar to those of Great Britain, and other monarchica! despotic governments. They patronized and supported a British hireling prin-

ter, at the then seat of government, who in his Gazette, avowed his attachment to monarchical government, and his abhorrence of Democracies. They passed an alien law, authorising the President, to banish from all the most near and dear connections in life, any alien he thought proper, without informing him of what he was accused, or who was his accuser, in direct violation of our excellent constitution, which secures to all persons the right of trial by jury, and having compulsory process for their witnesses, and their accuser face to face, and finally they passed a sedition law, to prevent an investigation of their conduct ; also in direct violation of our constitution, which secures to all Citizens freedom of speech and of the press ; entrenched behind this law, it was proposed by a member of Congress, "with a few bold strokes, to silence all opposition ;" they accordingly proceeded under the last mentioned unconstitutional, and tyrannical law, and the common law of England, to fine, and imprison, those Citizens, who unawed by tyrant's threats, determined at all events to support the sinking liberties of their country. They treated the name of our Constitution with contempt, and to the utmost of their power deceived the unlearned and unsuspecting part of the community, by representing a democrat, (which is the proper name of every citizen of the United States who is attached to the government thereof) as something diabolical, an enemy to religion, law, order, and good government ; and to deter those whose religious principles forbid war, from voting on the democratic side, they declared that before the democrats should carry their point there should be bloodshed.

Thus situated, in order to confer together upon the alarming situation to which our beloved country was reduced by the supporters of the above mentioned extravagant and tyrannical administration, a small number of democratic republicans, met unarmed, peaceably and constitutionally, at a School-house, the private property of Aaron Chew, near the north branch of timber creek, on the 28th of July 1800, where the then

Sheriff of the county, came armed, and with him two lawyers, and the constable of Deptford, and as he afterwards declared, determined to give any one who should attempt to remove him, the contents of his Pistols, and being requested to withdraw, by the said Chew, he and his company refused, upon which the Democrats peaceably retired to the dwelling house of Chew, where an address was delivered by the chairman, expressive of the necessity of a change of men and measures; unanimously approved, and ordered to be published, from which time, a few Democrats, sometimes not more than from five to ten, relying upon Divine mercy, and the Justice of their cause, continued their meetings, corresponded with their Democratic brethren in different parts of the State, and gradually increased in number until the 4th of March 1801, when a Constitution for a Democratic Association previously prepared and agreed upon by a meeting for that purpose, held at the house of Isaac Smallwood, was signed by a considerable number of the citizens of this County, from which time the association have held their stated and special meetings, peaceably and publicly, inviting all their fellow-citizens to attend. Convinced that evil deeds only dread the light, that truth and reason are the only weapons that will eventually overcome and destroy falsehood and error; we publish our proceedings that all our fellow-Citizens may have an opportunity of judging for themselves: Similar associations have since been formed in Cumberland, Hunterdon, Burlington, and Cape-May, which we trust will shortly diffuse general information amongst the people, productive of as compleat a change of men and measures, as hath been effected by similar associations in fourteen out of seventeen of the United States. The happy and beneficial effect of the recent change of men and measures, in the United States, exceeds the most sanguine hopes of its advocates. The conduct of the present administration and majority in Congress, contrasted with the latter, exhibits a scene propitious to equal liberty unparalleled in history. No alien law, to

expel from our peaceful shores, the helpless and afflicted victims of despotic tyranny; no infamous gag law, to prevent oppressed sufferers from investigating and exposing to public view the baseness of despotic rulers, the excise and stamp act and other unjust and oppressive internal taxes abolished, whereby liberty is restored to the Citizens, and more valuable articles of taxation to the respective States, than will defray the expence of the State governments; more than two thousand useless officers dismissed, five millions and a half of our public debt discharged in one year, and the expences of Government lessened more than one half, the expence of the United States government for year 1800, being the last year of John Adams administration was 7,180,000 dollars, the estimate for 1803, being the third of Thomas Jefferson's, is under 3 000,000. leaving a balance in favour of the present administration, of at least 4,180,000 dollars. Hence it appears, that exclusive of the advantage derived to the respective States by the repeal of the internal taxes, the bare saving in the United States government annually is sufficient in a short period of time to extinguish our public debt; Religion flourishes, in a degree heretofore unparalleled in the United States, and its benign influence is daily producing an increase of happiness, love, and harmony, amongst the Citizens of our peaceful land. Taking into view these circumstances we think ourselves in duty bound, to call upon our fellow Citizens, as they value the peace and happiness of the present and succeeding generations, to join us in the support of the present just, wise, and economical administration of the United States and in promoting a reformation in this State where there is a powerful Aristocracy combined with a numerous train of lawyers, office holders, office hunters, &c. This party, if possible to succeed at the ensuing Election, have privately associated and appointed secret committees in each township under the direction of a general committee one of which whilst a member of Congress declared that the officers of government were too few and their salaries from the President of the United States down to the doorkeeper of the house of Con-

gresses were too low, and that before the Democrats should carry their point there should be blood shed ; which said general committee, have directed the township committees, to solicit subscriptions for the support of the Trenton Federalist, a paper under the influence of the lawyers and their adherents, whose columns are generally filled with sophistry, base misrepresentations, and absolute falsehoods, many of which papers, we have good reason to believe, are distributed in this County, and elsewhere gratis, for the express purpose of misleading and deceiving the innocent, and uninformed part of the community ; and also to take the names of all the voters, male and female, with a mark affixed to each name designating their politics. This we conceive to be the most daring, and dangerous attack upon the liberty of the people and the freedom of Election, ever attempted in any civilized Country, equalled only by the popish inquisition, and must consequently meet the detestation and abhorrence of all friends of justice and equal liberty.

Having thus briefly informed our fellow-citizens of the original cause of our associating together, and the happy effects already produced by similar associations in producing a change of men and measures highly beneficial to the interest, peace, and happiness of the United States, we conclude with soliciting your particular attention to the futility of all attempts made by individuals to gain and retain their rights and liberties. Of many instances that might be adduced to prove this fact, we shall cite one which occurred in this county but a few years past, when a number of the farmers, and mechanics, weary with the oppression and insolence of the aristocrat and lawyer party, agreed to support a Farmer ticket in opposition to what was then called a Free-mason ticket, in which they completely succeeded three years, but having no stated meetings or permanent association, altho' greatly superior in numbers, their opponents by virtue of their frequent meetings and acting in concert, regained their ascendancy over the people of the county. The same party, with the addition of a few apostates, now styling themselves Federal Republicans, by deceptive sophistry, misre-

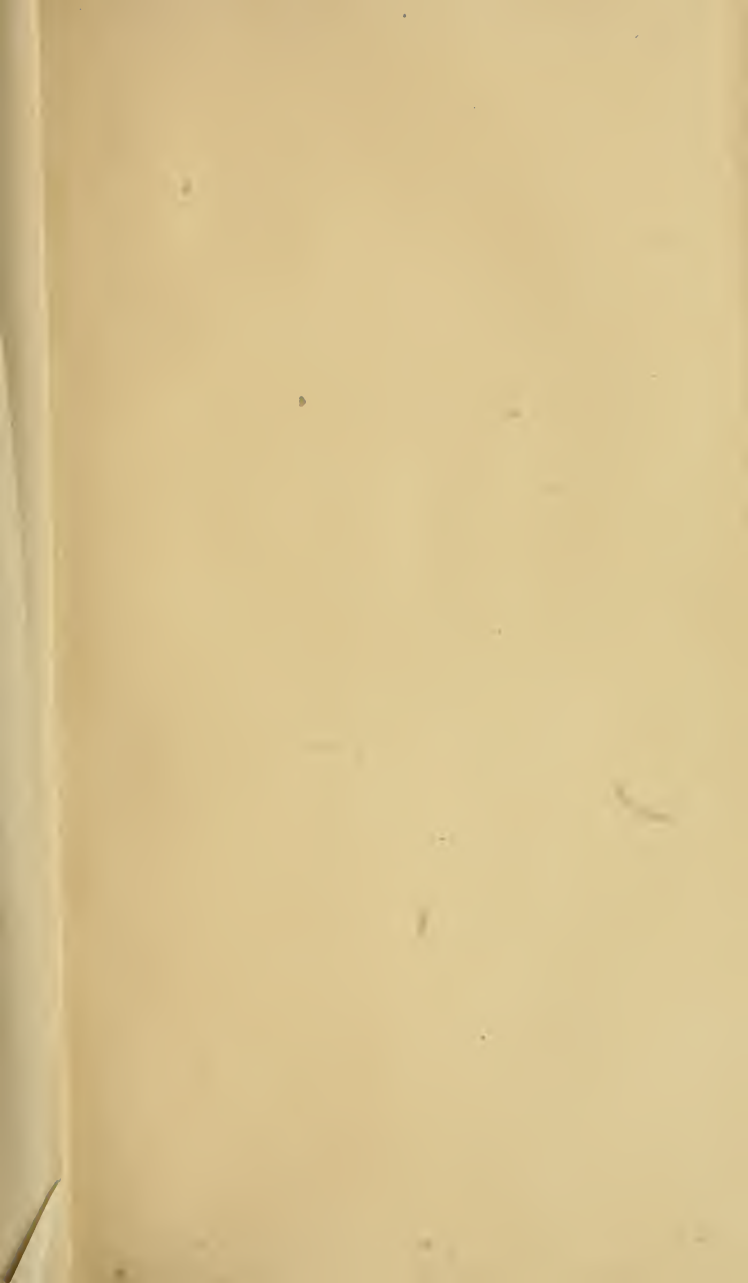
presentation and falsehood, continue to impose upon and mislead many of the innocent and uninformed citizens, by which means they retain their power and continue their oppression. Against such a powerful aristocracy, no force sufficient can be raised but the more powerful Democratic Associations, consisting of the virtuous yeomanry of the county :... We therefore request all good citizens of the county to unite with us in promoting the just and amicable mode which we have adopted of settling differences by arbitration, in preference to the vexatious and expensive mode now practised in courts of judicature, and also in electing men to offices of trust and power, who will simplify our laws in such a manner as to make lawyers useless, by which means many thousands would be annually saved in the state, and disputes settled speedily, whereby love and harmony would be preserved in families and neighborhoods, and morality and virtue promoted amongst mankind. These are the views of the Democratic Association of the county of Gloucester, hoping that our actions uniformly corresponding therewith will speedily produce the end contemplated by us, the restoration of our fellow citizens to that state of equal liberty which is the inherent and unalienable right of all mankind; and earnestly praying that this our beloved country may be under the peculiar protection of Him who is ALMIGHTY in power, and our councils directed by Him who is Infinite in wisdom that our liberties, civil and religious, may be established upon an immovable basis, and remain undiminished unto the latest period of time, that all kinds of vice and immorality, may be increasingly suppressed, "and pure and undefiled religion, as it is before God and the Father" more and more prevail, and that brotherly love, - peace, and good will, the certain attendants of true genuine piety may be assiduously cultivated by every description of our citizens.

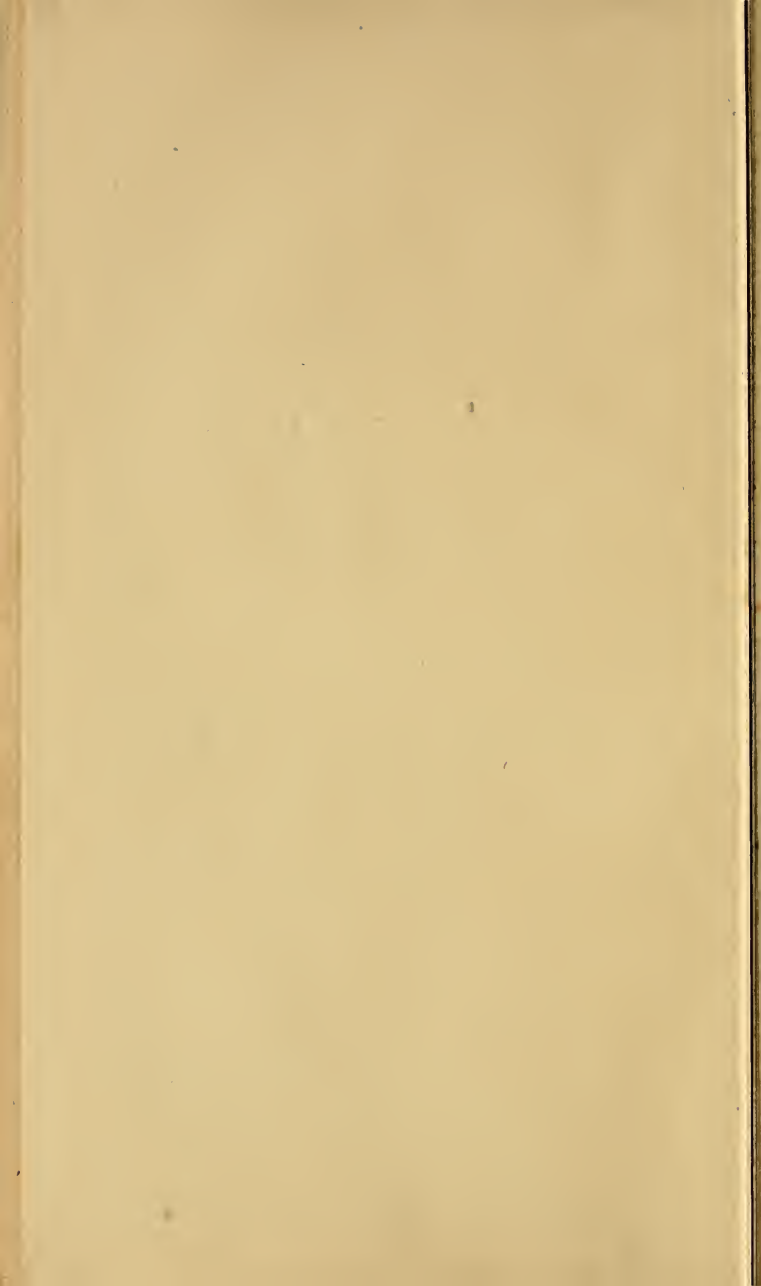
We affectionately salute you, and remain
your Friends and Brethren.

Signed by order of the Meeting,

JAMES SLOAN, *President.*

Attest JACOB GLOVER, *Secretary.*









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